REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

- Amendments –

Applicant respectfully requests that the pending claims be amended as indicated in the accompanying amended page(s), in which:

- Claims 1 and 2 are amended to better define the invention

Claims 1 to 5 remain pending. Applicant submits that no new matter has been added by these amendments.

- Remarks -

35 USC §103(a)

Claim 1 is rejected under §103(a) over Yamashita et al. (Yamashita) in view of Shimizu et al. (Shimizu). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

Claim 1 recites a step of reading a plurality of dither values of the dither matrix from the memory until a full line of dither values of the dither matrix has been read. Applicant respectfully submits that this feature is not taught or suggested by the combination of cited references.

The rejection refers to col. 18 - col. 21 of Yamashita as allegedly disclosing the above feature. This referred-to portion of Yamashita does not however teach or suggest a step of reading a plurality of dither values of a dither matrix until a full line is read.

It is firstly noted that the description at col. 18 concerns a converting of 6 blocks of parallel input into 4 lines of parallel output. The description at col. 18 does not concern a reading of dither values from a dither matrix. Moreover, it is disclosed at col. 17, line 55, that the process described in col. 18 is in any case performed on a 'block-by-block' basis rather than one full line at a time.

Next, referring to the description at cols. 20 - 21 concerning the dither matrix tables and the data stored therein, it is described therein that count values are output from a counter and used as address information for corresponding dither matrix tables. At col. 21, lines 1 - 4, it is described that the data in the first and fifth rows of the entire dither matrix are sufficient for the process described. Apart from these descriptions, Yamashita is silent as to how the data in the dither matrix table is read out.

Importantly, Yamashita fails to describe that data in the dither matrix table is read from memory until a full line of dither values has been read. Yamashita is completely silent in this regard.

Claim 1 is submitted to be novel and inventive over Yamashita and Shimizu as neither reference teaches or suggests the above feature.

The above notwithstanding, claim 1 is amended to further recite that after a first iteration of steps (a) to (c), steps (a) and (c) are performed simultaneously. Neither Yamashita nor Shimizu teach or suggest this feature.

Claims 2 - 5 are dependent from claim 1, and are submitted to be novel and inventive over the combination of Yamashita and Shimizu, and also over Matsuba et al. (US 5,815,286) for like reasons as presented above in connection with claim 1.

Other Amendments
Claim 2 is amended to maintain consistency with the amendments made to claim 1.

Favorable reconsideration of the application in light of the above amendments and remarks is respectfully requested. Applicant looks forward to word of further official communication in due course.

Very respectfully,

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